F-16 Fighter Plane deal between the USA and Pakistan

387. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to a news-item published in the Hindustan Times of 8th July, 1995 captioned "US in favour of reimbursing Pakistan for F-16s" fighter bombers paid for by Islamabad;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) what is the reaction of Government of India to the reported statement of the President of USA that he would explore with the Congress, the options for returning either the F-16s and equipment or the funds Pakistan had paid for?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The US Administration is prosposing to seek US Congressional approval for a relaxation of the Pressler Amendment to permit the supply to Pakistan of US $368 million worth of military equipment other than the F-16 aircraft which had been withheld since October 1990 under the Pressler Amendment. This package would include P-3C Orion aircraft, Harpoon and other missiles, engines and parts for F-16 aircraft, Cobra Helicopters etc. The US Administration proposes to sell the F-16 aircraft to a third country and reimburse the proceeds to Pakistan.

(c) Government has made its strong opposition to the above proposal clear to the US at various levels, both in India and the US.

Waiting list for Telephones in Punjab

388. SHRI IQBAL SINGH: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) what is the total number of telephone connections sanctioned in the country particularly in the State of Punjab during the last three years;

(b) whether it is a fact that the demand for telephone connections in the country is continuously increasing for the last three years;

(c) if so, the action taken by Government in this direction;

(d) what is the present position of the persons who are on waiting list for the last three years in the country particularly in the State of Punjab; and

(e) by when the said waiting list is likely to be cleared by Government?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM): (a) 39,97,173 connections were sanctioned in the country including Punjab during the last three years whereas for Punjab the figure is 1,93,570.

(b) Yes, Sir.

(c) The National Telecom Policy 1994 envisages to provide telephones practically on demand by 1997 all over the country, including Punjab.

(d) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

(e) Same as in (c).

हिमाचल प्रदेश स्थित गुजरात अम्बूजा सीमेंट फैक्टरी द्वारा किया गया प्रदूषण

389. **श्री सोमपाल:** क्या पर्यावरण और वन मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि:

(क) क्या सरकार का ध्यान दिनांक 15 जुलाई, 1995 के "इंडियन एक्सप्रेस" में प्रकाशित समाचार की ओर दिलाया गया है जिसमें हिमाचल प्रदेश में स्थित गुजरात अम्बूजा सीमेंट कारखाने द्वारा किए जा रहे व्यापक प्रदूषण और पारिस्थितिकीय विनाश की चर्चा की गई है;

(ख) यदि हां, तो इस पर सरकार की क्या प्रतिक्रिया है;